

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus comprising:

an area name dictionary stored with area names;

a classified name dictionary stored with classified names of facilities;

a facility name dictionary stored with facility names;

input means for receiving an input from a user;

identifying means for identifying, by referring to said area name dictionary and said classified name dictionary, whether each of a plurality of names input by the user is the name of an area name or a classified name, regardless of their order of input, and

extracting means for extracting, from said facility name dictionary, a facility name satisfying a narrow-down condition designated by at least one name which is identified by said identifying means as said area name or said classified name.

Claim 16 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising:

number-of facilities extracting means for extracting from said facility name dictionary a number of facility names satisfying the narrow-down condition designated by said at least one identified name; and

urging means for urging input of said area names or said classified names if said number extracted facility names is greater than a predetermined number thereof;

wherein said extracting means extracts from said facility name dictionary a facility name satisfying the narrow-down condition designated by said at least one identified name number of extracted facilities names is equal to or smaller than the predetermined number thereof.

Claim 17 (New) A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising:
number-of-facility-names storage means for storing, for each narrow-down condition, the number of facility names satisfying a narrow-down condition designated by an arbitrary name within said area names and said classified names;

number-of facilities extracting means for extracting from said facility name dictionary a number of facility names satisfying the narrow-down condition designated by said at least one identified name; and

urging means for urging input of said area names or said classified names if said number of extracted facility names is greater than a predetermined number thereof;

wherein said extracting means extracts from said facility name dictionary a facility name satisfying the narrow-down condition designated by said at least one identified name if the number of extracted facilities names is equal to or smaller than the predetermined number thereof.

Claim 18 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said urging means urges input of said facility names when said number of extracted facility names is greater than the predetermined number thereof and said at least one identified name is said classified name.

Claim 19 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said urging means urges input of further detailed area name when said number of extracted facility names is greater than the predetermined number thereof and said at least one identified name is said area name.

Claim 20 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the urging means urges input of said facility names after extracting said facility names by said extracting means.

Claim 21 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising: specifying means for specifying one name out of said facility names by comparing an inputted name after executing the urging of inputting said facility names with said extracted facility names.

Claim 22 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the urging means urges the inputting of a name for a specifying purpose if said identifying means is unable to specify said one name out of said facility names.

Claim 23 (New): A facility retrieval apparatus according to claim 22, wherein if said identifying means is unable to specify said one name out of said facility names the urging means urges the inputting of more detailed area names of classified names than said identified name as said name for the specifying purpose.

Claim 24 (New): A facility retrieval method for use in a facility retrieval apparatus having an area name dictionary stored with area names, a classified name dictionary stored with classified names of facilities and a facility name dictionary stored with facility names, said method comprising of:

receiving an input from a user by input means;

identifying in identifying means, by referring to said area name dictionary and said classifying name dictionary, whether each of a plurality of names input by the user is the name of an area name or a classified name regardless of their order of input; and

extracting in extracting means from said facility name dictionary, a facility name satisfying a narrow-down condition designated by at least one name which is identified by said identifying means as said area names or said classified names.